

Hart Van Denburg, *City Pages*

DFL Rep. Betty McCollum insists she does not hate NASCAR, she just can't figure out why taxpayers need to help sponsor a NASCAR driver and team already worth millions of dollars.

Republicans have squelched her amendment to defund the \$7 million program. She's received racist hate mail because of her stand. The woman has struck a nerve.

"This is where the rubber meets the road. We're making tough, tough choices in what to cut here," she told MSNBC last night. "So it's a choice between cutting homeless veterans' projects, kicking kids off of Head Start, or not having our tax dollars going to sponsor race car drivers."

For that matter, she wants to know, why does wildly wealthy NASCAR deserve any tax breaks at all. Isn't America broke?

Such pesky questions can mean only one thing.

"This shows that she is on the warpath against NASCAR," says outraged North Carolina Rep. Patrick McHenry. "This is more about her disdain for NASCAR than it really is about saving taxpayers' money."

Oh, come off it, McCollum said last night. Can't we just get our priorities straight?

"I wish Patrick would have talked with me before he made those statements. I watched the Indy 500, I watched the Dayton 500. It's something our family has done on and off over the years. We're not on the warpath against NASCAR. That's ridiculous."